CCN Newsletter

County Councils Network

Welcome to the Network's March Newsletter

It is March already and we are quarter of the way through the year; **CCN** is using the time wisely though and we have already started the planning for **CCN** Conference 2012 in earnest. This year's **CCN** Conference, hosted by Staffordshire County Council, will take place in November. If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities please visit the **CCN** website for further details.

Ploughmans Wood, Woodborough, Nottinghamshire

This month's newsletter looks at the recently published National Planning Policy Framework, School Funding, Child Safeguarding proposals and a range of other important subjects. We also outline the main points of the 2012/2013 **CCN** Work Programme.

CCN continues to publish its informative **CCN** Briefings with recent additions including **CCN** Briefings covering Business Rate Retention, Public Service Audit and the recent Child Safeguarding consultation. These are available to download on the CCN Website.

There are some dates for your diary too with National Family Week 2012 announced together with some forthcoming NALC conferences.

March also saw the awards ceremony for the prestigious 2012 LGC Awards. **CCN** member councils continue to do well. More on this can be found in this month's 'And finally……..' Congratulations to all involved!

As always, if you have any feedback on the Newsletter, items that you would like to see included or suggestions about how we can improve the Newsletter, please let us know. Contact kieran.smith@local.gov.uk or 0207 664 3009.

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CCN Executive: 23 May 2012 - The next meeting of the **CCN** Executive is 23 May 2012 at 1200hrs here at Local Government House. Further details and papers for the meeting will be available on the **CCN** Website in the near future.

CCN Council – The **CCN** Council met on 16 March 2012. Council welcomed Lord Taylor of Holbeach, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Defra, to the meeting. Lord Taylor went on to address the meeting, highlighting the role that **CCN** member councils play in delivering rural services, representing rural interests and tackling some of the most pressing needs of today.

Council also received some important updates about local government finance including Business Rate Retention, Council Tax benefits and the Local Government Resource Review. There were also items covering Rural Affairs, Public Health & Adult Social Care, and Political & Constitutional Reform. The **CCN** work programme for 2012/2013 was also approved and will steer the work of the Network for the next twelve months.

The papers for the meeting can be found on the **CCN** Website.

CCN Work Programme 2012/2013: CCN council agreed the **CCN** work programme for 2012/2013 at its March meeting - setting out the major work of the Network for the next twelve months. The Work Programme has been developed to take a number of factors into account including the continuing development of the Government's policy agenda for public services; the national economic situation and public finances - with a particular focus on the impact of the local government finance settlement, the Local Government Resource review and the next Spending review period; and the needs of **CCN** member authorities.

The **CCN** Work programme does not aim to cover all policy areas or to duplicate the work of the LGA on issues that affect the whole of the 'local government family', however the **CCN** team will continue to work closely with the LGA to share information and to coordinate our approaches where appropriate. In doing so **CCN** is able to promote the interests and provide clear voice for **CCN** member councils nationally and across Government.

For more information please visit the **CCN** Website or contact the **CCN** Team.

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The National Planning Policy Framework -

Following an extensive consultation, the National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012. To answer any questions that local authorities may have about the implications of the Framework, a helpline has been established jointly by the LGA, DCLG and the Planning Inspectorate. The helpline number is 0303 44 45500 and is available from 9am until 4pm, Monday to Friday until further notice.

Substantial and well-documented changes have been made to the document's provisions for rural areas, which have been widely welcomed; these include the recognition of the value of 'ordinary countryside' outside AONBs and National Parks, a more coherent concept of rural sustainability with greater flexibility about how communities handle development, and confirmation of the retention of rural exception sites. The 12-month transition period for authorities with an out of date local plan is particularly welcome in this context.

A new paragraph on 'viability' combines the former paragraphs 39 and 70, and reads:

- "Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable."

The section of the document covering strategic planning (in particular in two-tier areas) has been partially rephrased, and now reads as follows:

- 180. Local planning authorities should take account of different geographic areas, including travel-to-work areas. In two tier areas, county and district authorities should cooperate with each other on relevant issues. Local planning authorities should work collaboratively on strategic planning priorities to enable delivery of sustainable development in consultation with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships. Local planning authorities should also work collaboratively with private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers.

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- 181. Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. This could be by way of plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. Cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the land and infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development.

A full briefing is available on the **CCN** website – or for more details, please contact John Courouble e.mail: john.courouble@local.gov.uk or telephone 020 7664 3010.

Troubled Families – The ten local authorities with the largest numbers of 'troubled families' including three **CCN** member authorities have been signed up to a Government scheme to turn around 120,000 troubled households by 2015. This payment by results scheme will deliver up to £4,000 per family to local authorities with the aim of getting children back to school, reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour and help adults back into work with the aim of reducing the annual £9bn costs of dealing with these issues.

The **CCN** member councils involved in the first stage of this programme are Essex, Kent, Lancashire and Norfolk County Councils, thought the scheme is expected to rolled out to all top-tier and unitary councils in the near future. More information about this scheme can be found on the DCLG website.

School Funding Reform Consultation – The **CCN** has published a new **CCN** Briefing on the current DfE School Funding Reform Consultation: School funding reform: Next steps towards a fairer system.

The Briefing sets out the main points in the consultation in preparation for the development of a **CCN** response (the deadline for the submission of responses is 21May 2012). For more information and to download the Briefing please visit the **CCN** Website.

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Children & Young People Safeguarding: A Consultation -

The Department for Education has published its consultation paper on the measures that will be used to inspect services for vulnerable children and young people. Based upon Professor Munro's report, the proposals are far reaching and have the potential to have a substantial impact upon **CCN** member councils. More details can be found in CCN's Briefing. **CCN** is preparing a response to the consultation by the deadline of 16 April 2012. If you wish to contribute to the **CCN** consultation response please contact Kieran Smith, kieran.smith@local.gov.uk or telephone 0207 664 3009.

Local Government Accountability Statements – The Department for Communities and Local Government has published the Accountability System Statement for Local Government. This sets out the accountability system for local authorities and fire & rescue authorities for the 2012-2013 financial year and the current funding systems, legislation and guidance that form the current system. It also includes some pointers to the future including the future of local government audit and the impact of the 2011 localism Act. For further information please contact Kieran Smith, kieran.smith@local.gov.uk or telephone 0207 664 3009.

CCN County Beacon 2012 – The March/April edition of County Beacon is now available and can be downloaded from the **CCN** website The May/June edition of the **CCN** Beacon will look at **Rural Services and Communities**. If you have anything that you would like to contribute please let John Courouble, **CCN**'s Senior Policy Officer e.mail: john.courouble@local.gov.uk or telephone: 0207 7664 3010, know with the deadline for contributions being **20 April 2012**. Future editions of the Beacon include:

- **May/June (contribution deadline 20 April): Rural Services and Communities –** this should follow the Government's Rural Policy Statement; particular themes could include rural housing, tailoring local services to spatial difference / rural proofing, supporting rural enterprise and growing rural small business, and working with rural communities.
- **July/August (contribution deadline 1 June): General Good Practice (LGA Conference edition) –** an edition showcasing a range of good practice on the occasion of the LGA's annual conference at the end of June. If you have a piece in mind but it doesn't fit any of the other themes, submit it here!

- **September/October (contribution deadline 31 August): Driving service improvement and efficiency through new technology** – this could include remote service delivery, intelligent systems, ablement technology for older people, communication through social media, and collaborative technologies (or maybe something we haven't heard of yet but will all be using by the Autumn!)
- **November/December (contribution deadline 19 October) CCN Conference Edition:** This will have no specific theme but the majority of articles will tie in to workshops being run by member authorities to showcase good practice at the **CCN** Annual Conference. We will write round inviting expressions of interest for this nearer the time, but if your good practice example would be something that could be communicated and discussed in a useful and interesting way in a 45-60 minute 'seminar' format, you may wish to submit it here.

Dates for Your Diary:

Join in and celebrate family life in the UK

National Family Week 2012 takes place from Saturday 25 to Friday 31 August and aims to be bigger and better, engaging with thousands of families nationwide. Over the last three years, National Family Week has cemented its place as the UK's largest annual celebration of family life and aims to highlight the importance of quality time together and promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle.

For **CCN** member councils, National Family Week provides the perfect opportunity to promote the good work your council does to engage and connect with families and family life locally. Different departments can work together to share event planning, responsibility, resources and create a coherent and synchronised message to deliver your National Family Week plans. To find out how your council could get involved, download the County Councils Ideas Sheet or contact Bee Sachania on 020 7871 0189 or e.mail bee@nationalfamilyweek.co.uk.

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NALC Conferences 2012

NALC Conferences 2012: Bob Neil MP, Communities and Local Government Minster, has been confirmed as the headline speaker for NALC's three one-day conferences under the title of 'People in Action'. These events will be held on - Thursday 24 May: CBI Conference Centre, Centrepoint, London; Thursday 5 July: Bristol City Centre Marriott; Thursday 20 September: Mercure Sheffield St Pauls Hotel and Spa. For up–to-date information please visit www.nalc.gov.uk

NALC Larger Councils' Conference 2012: People Shaping Their Places NALC is holding a one-day Larger Councils' Conference this year, with the aim of showing how local (parish and town) councils can use the implementation of the Localism Act 2011 to derive benefits for their communities. Wednesday 28 November 2012: Royal National Hotel, London. Click HERE for more information.

And finally……

The LGC Awards 2012 - Once again **CCN** member authorities are well represented in this year's LGC awards, with **CCN** councils being shortlisted for awards in all but one of the 17 categories. **CCN** member authorities winning awards or being Highly Commended for their work were:

- **Workforce** – Cornwall Council: Human Resources & Organisational Development (Winner);
- **Public/Private Partnership –** Suffolk County Council: Suffolk Waste PFI Programme (Winner);
- **Public Sector Partnerships –** Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with NHS Cambridgeshire - Kick Ash (Highly Commended);
- **Management Team -** Lincolnshire County Council - Lincolnshire Fostering Management Team (Highly Commended);
- **Low Carbon Council -** Durham County Council - Altogether Greener (Highly Commended);
- **Corporate Governance -** Norfolk County Council - Norfolk Forward and the Big Conversation (Highly Commended);
- **Children's Services -** Cornwall Council - Newquay Safe Partnership (Winner);
- **Council of the Year -** Durham County Council (Highly Commended);

Congratulations to all involved!

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If you wish to know more about anything mentioned in this newsletter, please contact one of the **CCN** team:

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Further information about the **CCN** and our work can be found on our website: www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk

Follow **CCN** on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ccnoffice

As always, we welcome feedback on the items included. Which bits did you find interesting? Are there other things you would like us to cover? Please send us your feedback by clicking on this link.